

# Pontefract Castle:

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A N

## ACCOUNT

How it was TAKEN:

And how General *RAINSBOROUGH*  
was Surprised in his Quarters at *Doncaster*, October 29.  
1648. Written upon the Occasion of Prince *Eugene's*  
Surprising Monsieur *Villeroy* at *Cremona*.

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*In a Letter to a Friend.* By Capt. THO. PAULDEN. *K*

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Now Reprinted for the WIDOW, with some Passages taken from the  
Papers of Sir Marmaduke Langdale.

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## PONTEFRAC T CASTLE:

*An Account how it was Taken; and how General Rainsborough was Surprised in his Quarters at Doncaster, Anno 1648.*

S I R,

I Received your Letter, wherein you tell me, That the late News of Prince *Eugene's* surprising the Marshal *Villeroy*, in his Quarters at *Cremona*, put your self, and some of my Friends, in mind of the Surpise of General *Rainsborough*, at the Siege of *Pontefract Castle* in the late Civil Wars of *England*. And I being the only Person now living, that was an Actor in it, you are pleased to desire a particular Account of it; which, as far as I know, was never yet fully published.

I appeal to you, and all that know me, if ever I had the Vanity to boast of it, or so much as mention it, but sometimes at the Request of a Friend, as I do now at yours; tho' I had rather refuse to comply even with  
your



your Desire, at this time, than be thought so vain as to make any Comparison (other than of small Things with great) between such a particular Action in our own Country, and so publick and glorious an One, as that of Prince *Eugene*, on the Stage of *Europe*; which failed but by one Accident, of having been yet much more glorious.

But this I may say without Vanity, That our Design was Honourable, not to kill a General in the midst of his Army, but to take him Prisoner, and thereby to save the Life of our own General, Sir *Marmaduke Langdale*, then a Prisoner, and condemned to die, under whose Command we had served in the precedent War.

It may not be unacceptable to you, being a *Yorkshire* Man, to know the most minute Particulars of this Enterprize, we being all *Yorkshire* Men, who had a Share in it.

And first let me tell you how we took the Castle, which was a Garrison for the Parliament, as they call'd the Government, then Establish'd in a small Part of the *House of Commons*, and a very small Number of the *Lords*, sitting at *Westminster*.

*Pontefract,*



*Pontefract*, commonly called *Pomfret-Castle*, was thought the Greatest and Strongest Castle in *England*. It was the ancient Inheritance of the Dukes of *Lancaster*, called, *The Honour of Pomfret*. And it had the Honour to be the last Garison in the War begun in 42, that held out for the King.

In the Year 1648. the first War being over, we, that had served the King in it, submitting to our common Fate, lived quietly in the Countrey, till we heard of an intended Invasion by Duke *Hamilton*: Then we met frequently, and resolved to attempt the Surprising this Castle, of which Colonel *Cotterel* was Governor for the Parliament, having under him a Garison of an hundred Men, most of them Quartered in the Town of *Pomfret*, and in no Apprehension of an Enemy.

The Design was laid by Colonel *Morice*, (who in his Youth had been Page to the Earl of *Strafford*) my two Brothers, who were Captains of Horse, and my self Captain of Foot, and some others. We had then about Three hundred Foot, and Fifty Horse.

*See Appendix  
B.XI.*

Horse, of our our old Comrades privately Listed.

We had secret Correspondence with some in the Castle; Among the rest with a Corporal, who promised, on a certain Night, to be upon the Guard, and to set a Centinel, that would assist us, in Scaling the Walls by a Ladder, which we had provided, and brought with us. But the Corporal happened to be drunk at the Hour appointed, and another Centinel was placed, where we intended to set our Ladder, who fired upon us, and gave the Alarm to the Garrison. They appearing upon the Walls, our Men retired in haste, leaving the Ladder in the Ditch; whereby the next Day they within knew, that it was no false Alarm, but that there had been a real Attempt to surprise the Castle.

They took not a Man of us; our Foot dispersed themselves in the Country; and half of our Horse marched to Sir *Marmaduke Langdale*, who had then taken *Berwick* and *Carlisle*. The rest being twenty or thirty Horse, kept in the Woods, while we sent Spies into the Castle, and found that our  
Confe-



Confederates within were not discovered, nor our Design betrayed, but only failed by the Corporal's being Drunk.

The Ladder being found the next Morning, made the Governour call the Soldiers out of the Town, to lodge in the Castle: in order to which, he sent his Warrants into the Country for Beds to be brought in by a Day appointed.

We had Notice of it, and made Use of the Occasion. With the Beds came Colonel *Morice*, and Captain *William Paulden*, like Country Gentlemen, with Swords by their Sides; and about Nine Persons more, dressed like plain Countrymen, and Constables, to guard the Beds, but arm'd privately with Pocket-Pistols and Daggers.

Upon their Approach, the Draw-bridge was let down, and the Gates opened by our Confederates within. Colonel *Morice*, and those who were with him, entred into the castle. The Main-Guard was just within the Gate, where our company threw down the Beds, and gave a crown to some Soldiers, bidding them fetch Ale, to make the rest of the Guard drink; and as soon as they were



were gone out of the Gate, they drew up the Draw-bridge, and secured the rest of the Guards, forcing them into a Dungeon hard by, to which they went down by about thirty Stairs; and it was a Place that would hold two or three hundred Men.

Then Captain *William Paullden* made one of the Prisoners shew him the Way to the Governor's Lodging, where he found him newly laid down upon his Bed, with his Cloaths on, and his Sword, being a long Tuck, lying by him. The Captain told him, the Castle was the King's, and he was his Prisoner; but he, without answering any thing, started up, and made a Thrust at the Captain, and defended himself very bravely, till being sore wounded, his Head and Arm cut in several Places, he made another full and desperate Push at the Captain, and broke his Tuck against the Bed-post; and then asked Quarter, which my Brother granted; and he, for the present, was put down, among his own Soldiers, into the Dungeon.

Notice was immediately sent to me, lying hard by, of the Taking of the Castle; upon which I marched thither with about Thirty Horse, and it being Market-day, we furnished our selves with  
all

all manner of Provisions from the Town.

There came speedily to us, in small Parties, so many of our old Fellow-Soldiers, that our Garison was at last increased to Five hundred Men, which at the rendring of the Castle afterwards, were reduc'd to one hundred and forty.

We found in the Castle a good Quantity of Salt and Malt, with Four thousand Arms, and good Store of Ammunition, some Cannon, and two Mortar-pieces. We expected a Siege very suddenly, and got what Provisions of Corn, and Cattle, we could, out of the Country.

Particularly in one Sally, having Notice that there were at *Knotingly*, 3 Miles from the Castle, three hundred Head of Cattle, bought up in the North, going into the South, under a Guard of two Troops of Horse, we marched out at Night with thirty Horse, and Half a Dozen Foot, with Half-pikes to drive the Cattle. We faced the Troops that guarded them, while our Foot drove the Herd towards the Castle; then we followed, and kept betwixt them and Danger, the Enemy not daring to  
C charge.

charge us, and so we came all safe with our Purchase into the Castle. This, and other Provisions, we got in by several Parties almost every Night, enabled us to keep the Castle above nine Months, though we had not one Month's Provision, when we were first Beleaguer'd.

For in a very short time after, we were besieged by Sir *Edward Rhodes*, and Sir *Henry Choldmondly*, and five thousand Men of regular Troops: But we kept a Gate open on the South-side of the Castle, which was covered by a small Garison, we placed in an House called *New-Hall*, belonging to the Family of *Pierrepoint*, being about a Musquet-shot or two from the Castle.

Some time after, we heard, Duke *Hamilton* was beaten at *Preston* in *Lancashire*, and Sir *Marmaduke Langdale*, taken Prisoner, and brought to *Nottingham-Castle*. He was General of the *English* at *Preston*, who behaved themselves bravely; and, in truth, did all that was done there. He had, also, as I said, been our General; we had his Commission  
for



for taking the Castle, as he had the Prince of *Wales's*, and we were resolved to run any Hazard to release him : For it was commonly given out, that they intended to bring him before *Pomfret-Castle*, and to execute him in our Sight, if we would not immediately surrender.

It being like to prove a tedious Siege, General *Rainsborow* was sent from *London* by the Parliament, to put a speedy end to it. He was esteemed a Person of great courage and conduct, exceeding zealous and fierce in their cause, and had done them great Service by Land, and also at Sea, where he was for a time one of their Admirals. His head Quarters were for the present at *Doncaster*, being twelve Miles from *Pomfret*, with twelve hundred Foot; a Regiment of his Horse lay three or four Miles on the *East* of *Doncaster*, and another at the like Distance on the *West*.

Cap-

Captain *William Paulden*, who commanded all the few Horse in the *Castle*, laid a Design to surprise him in his Quarters at *Doncaster*; not to kill him, but to take him Prisoner, and exchange him for our own General, Sir *Marmaduke Langdale*; and it was only his ovvn Fault that he vvas killed, and not brought Prisoner to the *Castle*.

The Design seemed the more feasible, because the General and his Men vvere in no Apprehension of any Surprise; the *Castle* being twelve Miles off, closely besieged, and the only Garrison for the King in *England*.

In order to execute this our purpose, Captain *William Paulden* made choice of tvo and twenty Men, such as he most confided in. At Midnight being vvell horfed, vve marched through the Gate, that vvas kept open, over the Meadovvs, between two of the Enemies Horse-Guards, whom, by the favour of the Night, we passed undiscovered. Early the next Morning we came to *Mexborough*, a Village four Miles West above *Doncaster*, upon the *River Don*, where

where there was a Ferry-boat. There we rested, to refresh our selves and our Horses, till about Noon.

In the mean time we sent a Spy into *Doncaster*, to know, if there was any Discovery of a Party being out, and to meet us, as soon as it was dark, at *Cunsborough*, a Mile from *Doncaster*; which he did, and assured us, there was no Alarm taken by the Town, and that a Man would meet us at Sun-rise, it being then the beginning of *March*, who would give us Notice if all was quiet. Thither the Man came accordingly; the Sign he was to bring with him, to be known by, was a Bible in his Hand.

Captain *William Paulden* then divided his Two and twenty Men into four Parties; Six were to attack the Main-Guard, Six the Guard upon the Bridge; Four were ordered to General *Rainsborow's* Quarters; and the Captain, with the remaining Six, after he had seen the Four enter the General's Lodgings, was to beat the Streets, and keep the Enemy from assembling.

D

We



We presently forcing the first Barricades, and the Guards there dispersing into the Country, all the rest succeeded as we wish'd; the Main-Guard was surpris'd, we entring the Guard-Chamber, and getting between them and their Arms, bid them shift for their Lives; the same was done to the Guard upon the Bridge, their Arms being thrown into the River.

The Four that went to General *Rainsborow's* Lodging, pretended to bring Letters to him from *Cromwel*, who had then beaten the *Scots*; they met at the Door the General's Lieutenant, who conducted them up to his Chamber, and told him, being in Bed, that there were some Gentlemen had brought him Letters from General *Cromwel*. Upon which, they delivered *Rainsborow* a Packet, wherein was nothing but blank Paper. Whilst he was opening it, they told him, he was their Prisoner, but that not a Hair of his Head should be touched, if he would go quietly with them. Then they disarm'd his Lieutenant, who had innocently conducted them to his Chamber, and brought them

them both down Stairs. They had brought a Horse ready for General *Rainsborow*, upon which they bid him mount; he seem'd at first willing to do it, and put his Foot in the Stirrup; but looking about him, and seeing none but four of his Enemies, and his Lieutenant and Centinel (whom they had not disarm'd) stand by him; he pull'd his Foot out of the Stirrup, and cry'd, *Arms, Arms.* Upon this, one of our Men, letting his Pistol and Sword fall, because he would not kill him, catcht hold of him, and they grappling together, both fell down in the Street. Then General *Rainsborow's* Lieutenant catching our Man's Pistol that was fallen, Captain *Paulden's* Lieutenant, who was on Horseback, dismounts and runs him through the Body, as he was cocking the Pistol. Another of our Men run General *Rainsborow* into the Neck, as he was struggling with him that had caught hold of him; yet the General got upon his Legs vvith our Man's Svword in his Hand; but Captain *Paulden's* Lieutenant ran him through the Body, upon vvhich he fell dovvn dead.

Then

Then all our Parties met, and made a Noise in the Streets, where we saw hundreds of their Soldiers in their Shirts, running in the Fields to save themselves, not imagining how small our Number was. We presently marched over the Bridge, the direct Way to *Pomfret-Castle*, and all safely arrived there; carrying with us forty or fifty Prisoners, whom we met by eight or ten in a Company. We took no Prisoners at *Doncaster*; nor were any kill'd, or so much as hurt there, but General *Rainsborow* and his Lieutenant, and they too very much against our Will, because our main Intention was defeated thereby, which, I told you, was to exchange and redeem our own *General Langdale*; vvho, hovvever, the very Night before, had fortunately made his ovvn Escape, and lived to see King *Charles the Second's Restoration*, and to be made a *Peer of England* for his eminent *Services* in the War.

But to go on vvith our Affairs at *Pomfret*, seeing you have also the Curiosity to know vvhat became of us at last. After the Defeat  
of



of the *Scots Army* by *Cromwel* at *Preston* and *Wiggan* in *Lancashire*, Major General *Lambert* came against us ; and then we were close shut up, without hope of Relief, and our Provisions very nigh spent, which put us upon Capitulating, and they threw Papers over the Walls, offering honourable Conditions, saving that six Persons were to be excepted from any Benefit of the Articles, who were not to be named till after the Articles were signed by the Governour.

The Governour, Colonel *Morice*, hereupon call'd the Officers of the Castle together ; and we unanimously promised, we would never agree to deliver any Person up, without his Consent.

Upon this Promise, our Governour sent six Officers out of the Castle, to treat with the same Number named by Major General *Lambert*. Of our Number I was one. When we met, we told them, That we came to Capitulate about the Surrender of the Castle, but they could not expect that we would deliver our selves up to Execution.

E

Upon

Upon which, Colonel *Bright*, the first of their Commissioners told us, That he had Authority, from Major General *Lambert*, to engage, That none of us that treated, should be any of the excepted Persons: We told him, That perhaps the Governour might be one of them: He answered, That he did believe the Major General did not so much look upon the Governour, as some that had betray'd the Castle to us, when it was taken. So we parted for that time, without concluding any thing.

At our return to the Castle, we acquainted the Governour with all had passed; some of our Commissioners telling him, that Colonel *Bright* had engaged he should not be excepted. The Governour asked me, what I thought of it. I plainly told him, I thought he was intended to be one, and repeated to him the very Words that Colonel *Bright* had spoke, which made me suspect he would be excepted, because he had not engaged that the Governour should not be, as he had, that we that treated should not, but left it ambiguous. Then one of our  
Com-

Commissioners told him, that Lieutenant-Colonel *Crooke* had assured him, that our Governour was none of the Excepted; upon which, he resolved we should go out, and conclude, saying generously, that if he was excepted, he would take his Fortune, and would not have so many worthy Gentlemen perish for his sake.

Upon this, I desired the Governour to send some body else in my Place, for I had promised solemnly, I would never consent to deliver him up; (which he would have had me sworn to before, but I told him, my Word should be as good as my Oath.) So they went out, and concluded, and signed the Articles; and after signing of them, they brought to us, in the Castle, the Names of the excepted Persons, whereof the Governour was the First:

Their



Their Names were,

*Colonel Morice, our Governour.*

*Allen Austwick, Captain W. Paulden's Lieutenant, as one of those that kill'd Rainsborow.*

*Blackborne, Captain Paulden's Coronet, for the same Reason.*

*Major Ashby, } These three had been our Cor-  
Ensign Smith, } respondents in the Castle,  
Serjeant Floyd, } when we Surprised it.*

We were not obliged to deliver up any of these excepted Persons, but they had Liberty to make their Escape if they could, which they attempted on Horseback, the next Evening, by charging through the Enemies Army. At that very time their Guard unluckily happened to be relieving, so that the Number was doubled they were to break through.

The Governour, and *Blackborne* charged thro', and escaped; but were taken in *Lancashire* about ten Days after, (seeking for a Ship to pass beyond Sea) and brought to *York*, where they were both executed.

*Smyth*

*Smyth* was kill'd in the Attempt. *Austwick*, *Ashby*, and *Floyd*, were forced back into the Castle, where they hid themselves in a private Sally-port (which we had cover'd, designing to take the Castle again by it, when there should happen a fair Opportunity.) Thence they made their Escape the next Night, after the Castle was surrender'd, and all lived till after the King's Return.

Thus ended the Siege of *Pomfret-Castle*, which was soon after demolished; so that now there remains nothing of that magnificent Structure, but some Ruines of the great Tower, where the Tradition is, King *Richard* the Second was murthered.

I crave your Leave to add, what I had forgot to mention before, that we kept the Castle, till after King *Charles* the First was Martyr'd: When we solemnly proclaim'd King *Charles* the Second in it; and did not deliver it up till almost two Months after.

Be pleas'd that I inform you farther, that my Brother Captain *William Paulden* died of a Fever in the Castle, a Month before it was surrender'd; my other Brother, Cap-

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tain

tain *Timothy Paulden*, was killed in the Fight at *Wiggan*, being then Major of Horse to Colonel *Matthew Boynton*, under the Command of the Earl of *Derby*. I my self followed the Fortune of King *Charles* in his Exile, and was sent into *England*, on several Occasions for his Majesty's Service. I was once betray'd, and brought before *Cromwel*; but I denied my Name, and nothing could be proved against me: However he sent me to the *Gatehouse* in *Westminster*, from whence I made my Escape, with our old Friend *Jack Cowper*, by throwing Salt and Pepper into the Keeper's Eyes; which I think, has made me love Salt the better ever since; as you, and all my Friends, know I do, with whom I have eaten many a Bushel.

I went again beyond Sea; and, upon King *Charles* the Second's Restauration, returned into *England*, accompanied with my old Companion, Loyalty, and with the usual Companion of that, Poverty. The first never quitted me; the other by the Favour and Bounty of the Duke of *Buckingham*, was made tolerable.

And



And having now survived most of my old Acquaintance, and, as I verily believe, All, who had any Part in the foregoing Story, being in the 78th Year of my Age, I am glad I have had this Occasion of shewing my ancient Respects and Friendship for you, by obeying your Commands in this Particular; tho' you will not let me have the Honour to mention your Name, otherwise, than as a *Yorkshire* Man, and a Lover of them, who had faithfully served King *Charles* the Second, as you your self had done.

After all, perhaps, it will not be thought amiss, by our Countrymen of *Yorkshire* at least, that I have lived on to this time; if for nothing else, yet for this, that when the Memorable Action at *Cremona* shall hereafter be spoken of, with the Honour it deserves, this Attempt at *Doncaster* may not be altogether forgotten by Posterity.

*Sir, I am your most Faithful*

*Humble Servant,*

Thomas Paulden.

*What*

*What follows was taken from some Papers of Sir Marmaduke Langdale, communicated by the Right Honourable the Lord Langdale.*

**S**IR Marmaduke Langdale retreated with Duke Hamilton, till they came to *Uxeter* in *Staffordshire*, at which Place Duke Hamilton resolv'd to deliver himself a Prisoner to the Enemy, which Sir Marmaduke Langdale would not do; but endeavouring to make an Escape with about ten more, were taken Prisoners near *Nottingham*, by a Party from thence, and were brought to that Castle.

**F I N I S**

